1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

437 entrepreneurs have gained notoriety by their greed, but more
[426] have failed in business from having granted credit and finding it difficult to collect the debt. Traditional Santal are poor at haggling even with non-Santal, though they understand the basic principle of the market and may even be conversant with a variety of devices used to swindle the unsuspecting bargainer. They will rise early to buy at a market before it becomes crowded or to intercept dealers on their way who will sell for less while en route. They are often aware of price differences and will walk several miles to buy at the cheaper and sell at the more expensive market. But the traditional Santal, once at the market, is too eager a buyer, too poor a haggler, and too readily drawn into pleasant social intercourse to hold his own.

556 Despite envy, traditional Santal society developed something of a *modus vivendi* between rich and poor. At all festivals, at marriages in particular, and in everyday affairs the wealthy are required to validate their status by giving more than others. The wealthy are thus the greatest providers of "pleasure" for the community, and though there is envy as well as respect, considerable healing is accomplished and unity restored at major ceremonies to which the wealthy have contributed much. Also, in the traditional setting, even with wealth differences and the context of the market, the cultural gap between rich and poor
• [212] tended to be minimal. Fifty years ago the "elite" Santal, i.e., those with wealth and power, were almost totally illiterate; their style of life, judging by what one presently observes among illiterate and unschooled members of the elite, was only trivially different from that of their less well-situated neighbors. In terms of "likeness" the solidarity of the community was not greatly disturbed by wealth differences.

ooo Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 of schools of all levels has increased throughout this area,
327 Jamshedpur has probably as many high schools as all of Mayur-
871 bhanj District. TISCO has also provided a trade apprentice school, and enough elementary schools so that I heard of no instance in which a child missed schooling because of lack of facilities.

327 The effect on motivation is perhaps even more significant
464 since the Santal throughout the area are affected by it, whatever
871 educational opportunities prevail. Until the mid-1940's, when certain new political positions became available, the industrial town of Jamshedpur was virtually the only place at which an educated Santal might gain some return proportional to his educational investment. The entire structure of positions and salaries in Jamshedpur's industries, particularly in the relatively highly rationalized TISCO, makes it clear, even to the most unsophisticated, that it is educational attainment which is rewarded. Though the Santal chiefly occupy the lower echelons of factory employment, the literacy figures that I obtained comparing villagers, *bustee* dwellers, and city Santal support the conclusion that Jamshedpur is both motivation and lure for the educated Santal.

• 212

LITERACY RATE AMONG ADULT MALES

Village	20%
Bustee	42%
City	88%

Because of the limitations of the sampling method used (see pp. 64–65), these figures are probably not perfectly representative except for the city Santal, who were completely surveyed; but the order of difference is significant. Most of this literacy

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

212 was obtained before coming to Jamshedpur, so that it is not primarily the result of the education facilities actually created by Jamshedpur.

871 464 Many Santal children and young men are being sent by their families to live with kinsmen in the *bustees* or city because of their superior educational institutions. Furthermore, almost all children of Santal workers, even females, get some schooling.

[857] A key factor, apart from greater recognition of the economic value of education, is that there are few opportunities for these children to contribute to the family income from employment in the vicinity of Jamshedpur; children of villagers, however, began doing various farming chores even before they reach school age. Santal children in particular are very much aware of this difference. Since the number of Santal employed in Jamshedpur has grown rather steadily, so has the number of children of such workers who receive education.

871 Unfortunately, there are virtually no public figures showing the extent of the growth of literacy and education among the Santal. The following figures for the years 1924 to 1939, provided by the Education Department of the State of Mayurbhanj, give some idea of the steady growth of school enrollment among tribals during this period; no doubt this was accelerated during the boom war years.

My field inquiries indicate that there were no high school graduates thirty years ago and certainly no college graduates. Today there are few villages without at least one student attending high school, and I have met at least seven high school and three college graduates as well as two "B.A. failed," a special Indian designation which indicates a level of attainment as well as failure.

Education not only importantly determines "life chances" but

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 7 The "Great Tradition"

177 One might say that the Santal have been in search of a "great
178 tradition" since the time that they conceded the social and
668 cultural superiority of their Hindu neighbors. Having taken much from these neighbors, but desirous of maintaining their identity, they decided to create a "great tradition" of their own rather than accept the one belonging to their neighbors. [212] There is, for example, an attempt to codify Santal traditions in writing and even the development of a distinctive script in [771] which to record these traditions. In place of an essentially inexplicit religious ideology expressed in ritual, there is the development of an explicit religious ideology with an emphasis on morality. There is also the elaboration of literary forms wholly unlike the unpretentious traditional ones. Paradoxically, while these developments involve rejection of numerous Hindu practices, they introduce fundamental beliefs and values of Hinduism which previously had made hardly any progress among the Santal. Thus, while distinctive traits are re-emphasized, the configurations and orientation of Santal culture become somewhat more like those of the Hindus. However,

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 792 539 both rescuing the prisoners and defeating the enemy. This play is both a parable about duty, and, like the old myth of the caste functions of the clans, a charter for present independence. In addition, the existence of such a written epic raises the rank value of Santal culture; to hear Santal praise the play is to erase all doubts about the significance of this objective. The historicity of the play is provided with archaeological support by sophisticated Santal who note that an abandoned old fort far to the north was probably the seat of the old kingdom. Less sophisticated Santal remark that the Guru did not make up the play, but that it was the result of revelation preceded by meditation, fasting, etc.

• 212 668 792 It is also the Guru who created the original Santal script. Numerous booklets explaining it have been distributed, and there are many Santal, particularly among the industrial workers, who can read it. Formerly all Santali writing was in Nagari, Bengali, or Roman script as developed by the missionaries. Wherever there are large gatherings today, Santal may be seen reading particularly the words to new songs in the new script. The connection of the script with solidarity is obvious to all; the Guru reports that he was asked by the former Mahārājā of Mayurbhanj to cease propagating the script because it was divisive; he claims to have replied that he would gladly do so if the Mahārājā would see to it that the Oriya script was also abandoned.

536 668 Several drama clubs have sprung up to perform *Kherwar Bir* and some other recent plays. One particularly interesting one is called *Olong*, or "Fate" (*Olong* = fate, Oriya) and concerns the schism between rich and poor. It urges magnanimity on the former and curtailment of "envy" and "pleasure" on the latter.

S. Mukherjea O. Y-1,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Mundà-tribes are the earliest inhabitants of India of whom we have any knowledge.

The foregoing is a peep into the earliest chapters of Indian history to find materials to construct a rational hypothesis as regards the possible origins of the Mundà-tribes. References from Sanskrit texts could be given, but we can perhaps state without fear of contradiction that no scientific data have as yet been unearthed by the investigators as may enable them to frame a scientifically tenable theory. One can easily form vague surmises on the basis of still more vague materials furnished by the early Aryan myths and Puranic traditions; but they leave the serious student of social history wondering if he is not really undergoing the labours of Sisyphus. So it is that historians take shelter under mystifying metaphors when they draw the "veil of obscurity" over the earliest epochs of Indian history. Others, the more assiduous, traverse all the quagmire and build from time to time, interesting theories to be pulled down again by later investigators like a house of cards. But still the search goes on.

We make no apology, therefore, to present before the reader at this stage an idea of the Santal theory of Creation and their migration from their original seat, for what it is worth.

We need hardly add that these are oral traditions, as the Santals have no written script of their

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

773 own ; and although there are local variations in
212 different areas where the Santals are found at present,
184 they agree essentially in substance.

539 *Santal Genesis and Exodus*[1]

The "Hòṛkoreṇ Mare Haṛamko Reak' Katha[2]" which contains the Institutes and traditions of the Santals, lays it down that man was created in the east, the land of the Rising Sun. According to them, in the beginning there was only water and underneath the waters soil. Then Ṭhàkur Jiu (*the spirit of God*) created the aquatic animals as the crab, alligator, crocodile, "raghòp'-boar" (*whale*), tortoise, earth-worm, lobster and others.

Then Ṭhàkur Jiu said, "What shall I create now ?. I shall create man." So he made men in dual form out of earth. And as he was going to breathe life-breath into them, lo! from the skies "siñ sadòm" (*horse from the sun*) came down and destroyed the two images.

Ṭhàkur Jiu was very sorry. He said that he would no more make men but create birds.

[113] 1. This was published in the form of an article in the Mayurbhanj Chronicle, January, 1938, being a contribution by the author.

2. With acknowledgements to Mr. R. Kisku Rapaz, Assistant Headmaster, Dumka Zila School and the Benagaria Mission Press, Santal Parganas, which publishes the book.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

to be the most prominent. Any one glancing through a Santali dictionary will be struck with the vocabulary bodily assimilated by the Santals from the current dialects of Bengal, and any one listening even to their folk-songs will notice that a large number of them are really in Bengali. We marked it even in the heart of Santalia, the Santal Parganas, when we heard a Santal woman humming, "Panch takar ghati bati chore laia gela" (*My pots and bowls worth rupees five have been stolen by thieves.*)[1]

Santali itself is a peculiarly expressive language so far as natural objects and things concerning the common life of agriculturists. But when it comes to the expression of things spiritual or the common ideas of modern civilization, it has got to fall back on the speech of the neighbours.

It is not, however, a written language and their traditional legends are orally handed down. The question of a Santal script engaged the attention of the early European Missionaries and they used the Roman script. It is due to their efforts that a large number of books have been written in the Roman script and the education imparted to Santals in the

1 The missionary in charge of the Dharampur district (S. P.) tells a story that while he was there with his wife, a Santal tried to explain that it was useless for them to teach Santali, as they knew the language well enough and pressed for Bengali or Hindi. (*Annual Report of the Santal Mission of Northern Churches* 1934).

Bi Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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212 197 Santal Parganas has been through its medium. Side by side with the Roman script, the Bengali script has been used by some Santals in their publications notably by Raghunath Mañjhi of Rainrangpur, Mayurbhanj, in his collection of Santal Folk-songs, and by the Hindu Mission, Rajmahal, in their Santal literature. Some in the Mayurbhanj State have, however, adopted the Oriya script for Santali. While at present these three scripts are claiming for mastery, an attempt was made by Raghunath Mañjhi a school-master, mentioned above, to introduce a script which he himself invented. The script was shown to us by its author and it is understood that a section at least of Santal opinion advocated its acceptance, while others were of opinion that a fourth would lead to confusion, there being already too many in the field.

191 Undoubtedly for facilities of social intercourse with the '*Deko*' (*non-Santal*) world, most of the Santals are bi-lingual. One can notice them speaking a broken Bengali in the Santal Parganas and Oriya in Mayurbhanj ; and during our investigations about the Santals in the latter state, we found them following Bengali remarkably well. The Santals residing [177] in the heart of Bengal, speak Bengali fluently enough, [184] and some, as in the small colony of Santals in Chinsurah, Hughly, are perilously near forgetting their tribal manners and customs.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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following tribal religions numbered 1,112,355 (males 554,542 and females 557,813).

As regards literacy, the Census Report of 1931 records that out of a population of 1,304,034 Santals over seven years of age, Bihar and Orissa contained 8,899 literates. Coming to the Santal Parganas, the important Santal habitat, we find that there were in 1931 only 3,490 literate Santals.

Feudatory States

The total Santal population of the Feudatory States in Bihar and Orissa, according to the Census of 1931, is 309,504. (Census Report 1931, Bengal and Sikkim).

In Mayurbhanj, they constitute a little over 29 per cent of the population, their total strength according to the Census of 1931 was 258,195 (127,365 males and 130,830 females). Out of them 254,596 were returned as Hindus, 3,488 Animists and 111 Christians.

As regards the variations in the Santal population in Mayurbhanj, it may be stated that the Santals numbered 91,490 in 1891. "In 1901, they numbered 185,149 which is more than double the previous figure. A further increase by more than 15 per cent in their number occurred in the Census of 1911, when they numbered 214,164. In the succeeding Census of 1921, the rate of

3t Mukherjea Q. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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162 increase was abnormally low. It was a little over
[164] 3 per cent. The influenza epidemic was responsible for this result. In the present Census, the rate of growth has been nearly by 17 per cent."[1] The total variation in the Santal population of Mayurbhanj from 1891 to 1931 is + 166,705.

162 As regards literacy amongst the Mayurbhanj
212 Santals, it may be noted that while in 1911, there were 720 literate males and 38 literate females, the number of literate males and females in 1921 stood at 970 and 12 respectively. In 1931, however, the numbers rose to 2,044 males and 32 females.

162 Summing up, it may be said that the Santal
212 literates constitute 0·78 per cent out of their total
171 strength in Mayurbhanj, whereas, the Gonds record 3·37 per cent. This may also be usefully compared with the literacy figures of one of the Hindu castes viz. Kayasthas in Mayurbhanj which reach 36·39 per cent.

162 Out of the other Orissa states, it is gathered that Nilgiri contains 3,235 and Keonjhar 16,172 Santals according to the Census of 1931; and in both these states, the net variation from the year 1891 to 1931 was + 2,901 and + 14,446 respectively.[2]

[113] 1. Ref. *Mayurbhanj Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I, p. 151.

2 These figures were kindly supplied by Mr. P. K. Dass, Asst. Secretary, Mayurbhanj State.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Bengal

So far as Bengal is concerned, the Santals numbered 712,040 in 1921, but increased by 11·9 per cent to 796,656 in 1931. Thus while in 1891, the Santals formed 7·77 per cent per mille of the total population, in 1901 the number rose to 12·33, in 1911 to 14·45 and in 1931 it came upto 15·56. In regard to their religion, it is noticeable that while in 1921 only 158,383 were returned as Hindus and 553,657 under tribal religions, the Census figures of 1931 returned 433,502 as Hindu Santals and 352,386 as following tribal religions. The result is seen in an increase of Hindu Santals from 22·2 per cent of the total to almost 54·5 per cent. This phenomenal increase of Hindu Santals is explained as due to the missionary activities of the Hindu Mission and the natural increase in the number of Hindus in the tribe.

As regards literacy, the ratio (according to the Census of 1931) stands at 9 literates per 1,000 of the same age and sex above 7 years of age, there being 3 literates in English per 10,000 of the same age and sex.

We quote below the following table from the Census Report of 1931 (Bengal and Sikkim) showing the locality, actual number of Santals in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1901 to 1931 and the per-

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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MAYURBHANJ

Clan Santak (*signs*)

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If the Santals have mysterious pass-words to designate the clans, they have adopted a method of their own to distinguish themselves by symbols, specially fixed for their clans or sub-clans. Having no language of their own, these hieroglyphics help them to sign their names in documents. One, however, wonders how many of them were cheated by the *mahajans*, as they are so easy to be forged, as perhaps the Santal suddenly discovered before the "Hul" (Santal Insurrection of 1855). Whatever that may be, this sign-language is helpful to him to identify his cattle as the various clans brand these on the buttocks of the animals to distinguish them from those belonging to others. The list below contains some such signs as obtained from the Mayurbhanj Santals.

Name of clan or sub-clan	Sign-manual.	Designation.
Rok' Màṛṇḍi.....	'//,	Jora chhat.
Mirubaha Màṛṇḍi...	+	Dhera.
Hèmbròm.....	+	Dhera.
Gua Hèmbròm.....	'//,	Jora chhat.
Kaiṭa Ṭuḍu.....		Plough
Kisku.....	//;	Jorachhat.
Sona Murmu.....	+	Dhera.
Cilbindha Hansdak'.	'//,	Jora chhat.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

797 175

tion without losing sight of their main objective, the presentation of the Christian Gospel. One of their missionaries wrote in 1805: "We have by no means lost sight of the all-important fact that secular education without heart culture is of very little consequence. Hence, we have ever made the spiritual instruction of the people as prominent as possible. . . ."[1]

The main missionary effort developed in the north after the tragic rebellion of Santals had directed public attention to their affairs. The Santal Mission of the Northern Churches published its Seventy-Fifth Annual Report in 1941 and reported a total community of over 25,000 Christians. This mission, with supporting committees in Norway, Denmark and America, grew out of the pioneer work of a remarkable Norwegian, Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, and his Danish companions, Mr. and Mrs. Boerresen. Resigning from the Gossner Lutheran Mission, they began work independently and established a mission station at Benagaria in 1867. Skrefsrud, who was in every sense a giant of a man, prepared an *Introduction to the Grammar of the Santali Language*, which was published in 1873. It is to his enthusiasm and interest that we owe the account of the Santal traditions published in Santali in 1887. His linguistic work was carried forward and developed by the great scholar P. O. Bodding. To their efforts more than to any other cause the Santals owe the fact that Santali has developed a literature. The first efforts of the missionaries were aimed at providing the scriptures, song books and reading primers, for which purpose the Roman script was adapted, but a great stimulus to the study by the Santals of their own institutions was provided by the publication of the traditions.[2] This mission also publishes the only Santali periodical, which is now in its twenty-sixth year. Other societies that have made notable contributions to missionary work in the Santal Parganas and neighbouring areas are the Church Missionary Society and the Church of Scotland, the latter being particularly noted for the excellent service of medical missionaries at Bamdah. The Santal members of the different Church bodies are brought together in the meetings of the Santal Christian Council, a body that was established in 1934 and is the only organization of any kind that brings together Santals

[127] [212] [214] 797 794 [113]

[1] Stacy, *Life of Otis Robinson Backeler*, p. 318, quoted from *Primary Education among Santals of Midnapore, 1931, A Survey with Proposals*, by Lewis Clayton Kitchen, Calcutta.

[2] *Mare Hapramko reak' Katha*, Dumka (1st ed., 1887). An English translation by P. O. Bodding was published in Oslo in 1942, entitled *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals*.